



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

I must add, however, that it is certainly not because Mr. Atkinson's hope is so bright that I have found occasion for this criticism. The hope of every American of healthy mind cannot *but be bright*. But, simply the truth regarding the resources and possibilities of this land of ours will amaze the world ; while, as for ourselves, we should remember that no one is so greatly deceived as he who deceives himself. I would not repress optimism, but would have it conform, in a measure, to the proposition that two times two still equals conservative, old-fashioned four.

DATUS C. SMITH.

II.

STORM-EFFECTS ON MENTALITY.

It has been argued, with more or less warmth, that one's disposition is largely affected by the kind of weather which prevails when one is born. While this is possible, it is also fanciful, and but few put any faith in it. There is, however, another weather phenomenon in which I believe: I am convinced that thought is influenced, in a very considerable degree, by the weather. My notice was first drawn toward this by a line in one of Voltaire's letters, in which he said: "My work has been murky, to-day, because the weather was murky." From this time on, I took close and careful account of my mental condition during various kinds of weather.

The result was a matter of great surprise to me, and it sometimes enforced deductions and conclusions which were almost startling. Though I seldom had sufficient time to profit by it, I found that the execution of plans, made during calm weather, was impossible during stormy weather, without the making of frequent changes—not only in details, but in general methods as well. Time and again, in some period of bright, sunshiny weather, I would lay out the plot of a novel, which would be full of the cheer and the joy of the smiling mood of nature. I would begin writing, full of the encouraging impetus which the weather gave me, and glad that I was able to do something which would be apart and separate from my nervous, dismal self ; and then a storm would swoop down upon me, and with dolorous scratch, my pen would clothe dolorous thoughts in even more dolorous words. When the storm was cleared, and the sun shone again, I would once more find myself able to make the things which I wrote as blithe and buoyant as the weather.

Storms always disturb me—sometimes they depress me, and make me feel tearful without knowing why. It is very hard to write *mots* which sparkle and glitter with mirth, when one's heart is heavy and sombre—just as it is difficult to write dirges when one feels like railing and joking. And so, fair weather is best suited to the writing of comedies, and foul weather to the writing of tragedies.

Another curious circumstance was the provoking features which characterized the working out, in fair weather, of a plot which I framed during a violent storm. Try as I would, I never could touch this story up so that I dared print it, and at last I burned it in despair.

Once, as an experiment, I planned two novels, to be worked on simultaneously. The one plot was shaped during a stormy period, and the other during a brief season of sunshine and summer glory which immediately followed. Whenever it was stormy, I worked upon the storm-planned novel ; and whenever the weather was bright, I worked upon the other. In each instance, I wholly surrendered myself to the moods which the weather stirred up within me, and made no effort to shake off the good cheer of the one or the despondency with which the other en-

compassed me. As a result, the novel upon which was settled no shadow of the storm-taint was cheerful and good-humored ; but the other was so bitter, mournful and vindictive, that I never printed it. In each of these cases, of course, I allowed myself to be wholly moved and swayed by atmospheric tendencies ; and though I lost the profits of several weeks of literary labor, I learned an invaluable lesson. I saw that by properly fortifying myself, and by making the right kind of struggles, I could resist yielding to both the dangerous flavor of soft sweetness, which sunny skies induced, and, also, in the same way, to the spitefulness and melancholy which were the legacy and gift of the storm-spirit. That is, I succeeded in partially overcoming the influences and effects of the weather, and, at all times, in keeping myself in a mental condition of passable evenness. The complete and perfect disentanglement of one's mental action from such phenomena is, to me, an impossibility ; and it in some degree enables me to understand why I wrote so much in " *Lelié* " which I have since so often regretted.

These things which I speak of are so apparent in the works of some of my literary friends, that I can almost distinguish, in some of their stories, the very line and word which they were doing when some storm either began or ended.

Why should it be otherwise ? We are so sensitively constituted that we must, of necessity, be affected by the alternations of storm and sunshine. The more exquisite the personality, the stronger the influence ; and, in the case of invalids, the effect is more considerable than it is in persons of sound health. Women feel storm-effects more keenly than men ; and the young more keenly than the old. The nervous are the storm's most restless slaves, and the phlegmatic escape it altogether. Many persons, without appreciating the reason of it, declare themselves unable to fix their thoughts upon any one subject, except in the most haphazard and incoherent way, during the prevalence of storms. Consequently, many find it beyond their capacity to do anything in the way of finished mental work in either the early spring or the late autumn. Many writers never once touch a pen during stormy weather, and others can only write clearly and forcibly with a tempest shrieking about their windows.

Poets and artists suffer most from storms ; the latter, far more than would seem likely on mere casual thought. Many a picture has been spoiled by having its last touches laid on when it was storming. Coloring, whether verbal or pigmental, takes much of its tone from sky and atmosphere.

Races, as well as individuals, get much of their mental equipment from the weather. A nation whose home is often under storm-clouds, and in the track of tempests, has more disagreeable traits than a nation which best knows a serener atmosphere : just as a race which inhabits the high mountains has little or nothing in common with the people of the plains and deserts.

Literature, more than anything else, suffers under the malignity of storms, because all literary effort is the picturing of moods and emotions in words. As children resemble those who beget them, so words are like those who utter them ; and the words which are wrung from us by pain are not likely to win us many smiles from those who hear them. We speak as we feel, and our feelings are the reflection of our conditions and circumstances. The ship-wrecked sailor, half-drowned, and wet to the skin in some wild, wintry sea, will scarcely go into raptures over the pleasures and benefits of salt-water bathing ; and the man who writes of the wooing of young lovers, when a fierce blast seems bent on beating in his study-windows, cannot be justly blamed if what his hero whispers into the ears of his heroine is something after the fashion of a death-knell.

GEORGE SAND.